

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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The following report represents an unofficial analysis of the relative status of Soviet Premier Malenkov and other top Soviet officials during the Stalin Era. Comments have been made where the factual material needs explanation, but no attempt has been made to evaluate the opinions expressed.

1. Through I.V. Stalin's private cabinet and the Secretariat and Orgburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (bolsheviks), G.M. Malenkov reached, in 1946, the position of Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and member of the Politburo of the CPSU(b). By promoting Malenkov to high Government positions, Stalin intended to raise Malenkov's authority outside the Party also and to build up his reputation as a statesman.
2. In connection with Malenkov's rise to power through the Party, it is important to note that he was the main supporter, interpreter, and executor of Stalin's decisions and authority over the Party. The other members of the Politburo were overwhelmed with Government functions and were thereby almost removed from the daily direction and life of the Party. Although Zhdanov, like Malenkov, was not occupied with any State functions, he operated in a completely different sphere in the Party and was not concerned with its internal problems. Similarly, Malenkov was not acquainted with Zhdanov's sphere of activities.²
3. Because of his prolonged intimate collaboration with Stalin, Malenkov became acquainted with Stalin's characteristics earlier and better than the other leaders. He realized that it would be better for his career to enjoy, as long as possible, the favor of the great chief. For this reason, Malenkov very cleverly interpreted and implemented Stalin's intentions, without advancing his own views or attempting to increase his own authority.
4. Zhdanov did not possess the characteristics of Malenkov, although his loyalty to Stalin could not be doubted. Zhdanov was more intelligent and had a larger number of admirers both inside and outside the Party than Malenkov. Zhdanov acknowledged Stalin's wisdom, but also pushed himself forward. The fact that

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he died at the height of his glory serves to prove a widespread opinion that Stalin did not like the manner and the extent of Zhdanov's rise to power. Stalin would allow certain frictions in his immediate vicinity without personally taking part in them only so long as the danger was not too near to him.

5. Few Party and Government leaders enjoyed the same favor of and intimacy with Stalin as Malenkov. He was acquainted with a number of Stalin's thoughts and decisions that he took against the other top members of the hierarchy. Malenkov knew how to keep his thirst for glory in check in front of Stalin. Zhdanov did not know how to do this and was, therefore, relegated to second place in Stalin's favor. Malenkov not only imitated Stalin outwardly, but cynicism and lack of feeling are his characteristic traits. Thanks to the great confidence that Stalin had in him, Malenkov had succeeded, even in the earlier period, at the time of the great purges, to be Stalin's terrible plenipotentiary in the carrying out of important assignments. According to credible reports, K.K. Rokossovskiy, K. Ye. Voroshilov, and also A.I. Mikoyan owe their lives to Malenkov, after the latter had settled, in Stalin's name, the scores with Nikolay Yezhov. Voroshilov, otherwise, was inclined toward Zhdanov and was, therefore, warned in a friendly manner by N.M. Shvernik after A.S. Shcherbakov's sudden death in 1945. After the death of Shcherbakov, who had been an intimate friend and admirer of Zhdanov, the latter himself tried to establish closer contact and collaboration with Malenkov, in order not to be isolated.
6. After Zhdanov's death, important events took place which may be considered as a reflection of Stalin's tactics, such as the assassination of personalities who were potential obstacles to his dictatorial omnipotence. An extensive purge took place in the Leningrad organization, which had been mainly instrumental in Zhdanov's elevation. Nikolay A. Voznesenskiy and Aleksey A. Kuznetsov, friends of Zhdanov, were expelled from the Politburo of the CPSU(b).³ Even Zhdanov's son was removed from his position in the Party. There are no indications that Zhdanov was, or had worked, against Stalin. Stalin merely did not like the fact that Zhdanov was gaining an increasing number of sympathizers, in spite of the fact that the number of his enemies among the intellectuals, whom Zhdanov attacked violently, was also increasing.
7. However, Zhdanov's death brought in its wake the rise to power or activization of certain personalities, with Stalin's approval. These included M.A. Suslov, who became a candidate of the Politburo in 1948⁴, and A. Ya. Vyshinskiy, who could speak more freely regarding foreign political and legal matters and who was given a free hand in the choice of appointees to the foreign service.
8. On the basis of Malenkov's deliberate tactical "withdrawal" or his work concerned with internal Party problems, it would be incorrect to draw the conclusion that he was temporarily out of favor, even at the time when Zhdanov had better chances to become Stalin's heir.
9. At the founding session of the Cominform, Zhdanov and Malenkov were the representatives of the CC of the CPSU(b), i.e., Stalin's plenipotentiaries. Zhdanov's report and the official attitude of the CC of the CPSU(b) are well known. Zhdanov and Malenkov, particularly Malenkov, had no special attitude or opinion of their own concerning the policy of the Cominform. During the session, Stalin and V.M. Molotov were kept informed of all developments. The delegates of the CC of the CPSU(b) had to be consulted before each move was taken and, generally speaking, life was easy for the Soviet delegates until the appearance of the Yugoslav resistance. Zhdanov and Malenkov presented a common front in the interests of the domination of the Kremlin over the other parties.
10. The Kremlin had decided to found the Cominform in order to set up again an organ which would replace the Comintern and facilitate the establishment of the Kremlin's domination over the international working-class movement. It was easier for the Kremlin to impose upon the member and non-member parties of the Cominform laws of life and work which had been "adopted" than to have to haggle with each individual party regarding its line of policy. On the other hand, under the post-war conditions, it would have been tactless, with regard to world public opinion, to give direct orders

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to the other parties in the world, without the existence of such a recognized medium as the Comintern had been or the Cominform was to become. At the founding session, the Cominform was portrayed as a consultative body and as an organ for the exchange of experiences, without power over the other parties. It was in the Kremlin's interest that such a view about this organization should prevail as long as possible.

11. However, Yugoslavia's example has completely unmasked the Cominform. It has shown that it pursued different aims. It was formed primarily for the purpose of subjugating Yugoslavia and the East European countries. If we point out that the Cominform was composed of men selected from the member parties by the Soviet intelligence service, in cooperation with the Orgburo of the CC of the CPSU(b), and that the Soviet intelligence service had full power over them, then we know how this organization operated. Yugoslavia was, of course, an exception, because her delegation was appointed in Belgrade and not in Moscow. In the eyes of public opinion and Communist Parties, the Cominform should have appeared as a body superior to the CC of the CPSU(b), but actually it has never been so. The Cominform has always been unequivocally under the direct leadership of Moscow. All resolutions, directives, newspaper articles, and other publishable materials had to be approved in Moscow.
12. The centralized power over the Cominform was in the hands of Stalin, Molotov, Zhdanov, and Malenkov. These persons were the guardians of the Cominform gospel. The official Soviet representatives were mere civil servants, especially Suslov. Suslov mainly followed the same road as Malenkov, and it was believed that he owed his rise to power to Malenkov. It was Malenkov who informed Stalin about various personalities, especially in the later period when it had become clear that Stalin had serious plans concerning Malenkov. Suslov never opposed anybody. He did not even oppose Zhdanov, when working in the Propaganda Department of the CC of the CPSU (b).
13. P.F. Yudin, an old agent of the Soviet intelligence service, was in fact its representative in the Cominform. He maintained contact with the majority of member-delegates of individual parties. The Bulgarians' delegate Vladimir Poptomov was very angry with Yudin because the latter had refused, during the mass arrests of Bulgarians in Moscow at the time of Nikolay Yezhov, to go to Georgi Dimitrov and ask him to "intervene" against the arrests. Yudin declared at that time that he had to guard his own skin, although he had taken an active part in the purges of that period.
14. N.S. Khrushchev's rise to power was not surprising. Even during Stalin's life-time, he was Malenkov's most likely successor in the field of organizational work in the Central Committee. It was true that Khrushchev earned Stalin's favor partly because of Malenkov, but he also earned it mainly because of his own capabilities in dealing with the Ukrainian problem. It could also be added that Khrushchev had helped Malenkov in his day, when Khrushchev was Malenkov's senior in the Central Committee. The rise to power of Khrushchev, M.D.A. Bagirov, and others should not be explained by differences of policy, because such differences did not exist. In his advancement, Bagirov was, in addition to his capabilities, merits, and Beriya's friendship, also helped by the national movement (he is a Moslem).⁵
15. It would be inappropriate to indulge in any forecasts concerning the fate of Soviet leaders, because the present leadership will probably have to maintain a balance of power for a long period of time. It is true that such a system as that in the USSR will not be able to maintain a balance of power on the basis of the division of power into several sectors. In view of the fact that the people at the top of the pyramid in Moscow are not used to such a "democratic" allotment of sectors or "independence", they will not be able to come to terms and will fight for prestige. Stalin's death, regardless of the loyalty of his subordinates toward him, could not fail to raise the whole problem of the established order of things, but it will not raise the problem of basic policy, which is the legacy of the bureaucratic system and which has been built up in the USSR over a long period of time.

1. Comment: Zhdanov was Chairman of the Council of the Union of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR from March 1946 to February 1947.

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2. [redacted] Comment: Zhdanov's positions during this period included Secretary or the Leningrad Party organization from 1934 to 1945 and Chief of the Allied Control Commission in Finland from 1944 to 1948. 25X1

3. [redacted] Comment: Kuznetsov was a member of the Central Committee and of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), but he was not a member of the Politburo. 25X1

4. [redacted] Comment: Although Suslov frequently appeared with members of the Politburo and was listed at the bottom of a list of Politburo members, he was not a member of this group. At this time, however, he was a member of the Orgburo and the Secretariat of the Central Committee. 25X1

5. [redacted] Comment: From Bagirov's statements on the Moslem religion, it would appear that he is not a Moslem. See Bolshevik of July 1950. 25X1

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